



# DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

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June 12, 1980

## FATHER WANTLAND ELECTED BISHOP OF EAU CLAIRE

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. -- The Rev. William Charles Wantland of Oklahoma City was elected Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eau Claire at Christ Church Cathedral here on June 7 at a special convention.

Father Wantland, who has been rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Oklahoma City since 1977, received the required majorities in both lay and clergy orders on the ninth ballot late in the afternoon. Bishop Walter Heath Jones of the Diocese of South Dakota finished second in the balloting, which saw the names of 34 priests placed in nomination. The Very Rev. Jay W. Breisch, dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Eau Claire, had withdrawn at the end of the seventh ballot.

Father Wantland, a member of the Seminole Nation and a lawyer, has indicated his acceptance of the election, subject to the required approval of the majority of the diocesan bishops and standing committees of the Episcopal Church.

When he is ordained and consecrated fourth bishop of the diocese, Father Wantland will succeed retiring Bishop Stanley Atkins immediately or September 30, whichever is first. Bishop Atkins, 68, has led the diocese since his consecration in 1970.

Father Wantland, 46, has been active in his native Oklahoma in many Indian rights efforts. He recently completed a special study of the needs for ministry on the Ute Indian reservation in Utah at the request of the Episcopal Church's National Committee on Indian Work and Bishop Otis Charles of Utah. Last fall he spent several weeks in Nicaragua with two others making a similar study for the Church in that diocese.

Born in Edmond, Okla., he received his B.A. degree from the University of Hawaii in 1957 and his LLB and his JD degrees from Oklahoma City University in 1964 and 1967 respectively. His D.Rel. degree was received in 1976 from Geneva-St. Albans Theological College. His ordination to the priesthood was in 1970.

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In the Diocese of Oklahoma, he has been regional dean of southeast Oklahoma, president of the standing committee, vicar of St. Mark's, Seminole, and of St. Paul's, Holdenville.

He is the author of Christian Initiation and Cultural Problems between Indians and Non-Indians.

At the national level, Father Wantland is a member of the National Committee on Indian Work and of the Coalition for Human Needs.

In 1954 he married Mary Jo Watson, a member of the Seminole Nation, and the present director of the Indian American Heritage Center in Oklahoma City. The center features exhibits and serves as a showcase for Indian artists. Father and Mrs. Wantland have three children.

The Diocese of Eau Claire has 27 congregations, 26 clergy and about 3,800 members.

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